

America has been engaged in this war for nearly a year, and we've made real progress. Yet more work remains. A new Department of Homeland Security will help us to protect our country, but only if it has the tools to get the job done. I urge the Senate to follow the House's lead and pass legislation that gives the Department the flexibility and the authority it needs to protect the American people.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:35 a.m. on September 6 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and an Exchange With Reporters at Camp David, Maryland

September 7, 2002

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the Prime Minister back to Camp David. I look forward to spending a good 3 hours talking to our friend about how to keep the peace. This world faces some serious threat—and threats—and we're going to talk about it. We're going to talk about how to promote freedom around the world. We're going to talk about our shared values of—recognizes the worth of every individual.

And I'm looking forward to this time. It's awfully thoughtful of Tony to come over here. It's an important meeting, because he's an important ally, an important friend.

Welcome.

Prime Minister Blair. Thanks.

I'm looking very much forward, obviously, to discussing the issues that are preoccupying us at the moment, with the President. And I thank him for his kind invitation to come here and his welcome.

The point that I would emphasize to you is that the threat from Saddam Hussein and weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological, potentially nuclear weapons capa-

bility, that threat is real. We only need to look at the report from the International Atomic Energy Agency this morning showing what has been going on at the former nuclear weapons sites to realize that. And the policy of inaction is not a policy we can responsibly subscribe to. So the purpose of our discussion today is to work out the right strategy for dealing with this, because deal with it we must.

President Bush. AP lady [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what conclusive evidence of any nuclear—new evidence you have of nuclear weapons capabilities of Saddam Hussein?

President Bush. We just heard the Prime Minister talk about the new report. I would remind you that when the inspectors first went into Iraq and were denied—finally denied access, a report came out of the Atomic—the IAEA that they were 6 months away from developing a weapon. I don't know what more evidence we need.

Prime Minister Blair. Absolutely right. And what we—what we know from what has been going on there for a long period of time is not just the chemical, biological weapons capability, but we know that they were trying to develop nuclear weapons capability. And the importance of this morning's report is it yet again shows that there is a real issue that has to be tackled here.

I mean, I was just reading coming over here the catalog of attempts by Iraq to conceal its weapons of mass destruction, not to tell the truth about it over—not just over a period of months but over a period of years. Now, that's why the issue is important. And of course, it's an issue not just for America, not just for Britain; it's an issue for the whole of the international community. But it is an issue we have to deal with. And that's why I say to you that the policy of inaction, doing nothing about it, is not something we can responsibly adhere to.

President Bush. Do you want to call on somebody? You don't have to if you don't want to. [Laughter]

U.N. Resolution on Iraq

Q. A question for the President and the Prime Minister—will you, Mr. President, seek a U.N. resolution prior to any action against Iraq?

And for the Prime Minister, would you sanction any action against Iraq before—without a U.N. resolution?

President Bush. Well, first, I'm going to give a speech next Thursday, and I'd like you to tune in.

Prime Minister Blair. As I said to you, I think at the press conference we gave earlier in the week, this is an issue for the whole of the international community. But the U.N. has got to be the way of dealing with this issue, not the way of avoiding dealing with it. Now, of course, as we showed before in relation to Afghanistan, we want the broadest possible international support, but it's got to be on the basis of actually making sure that the threat that we've outlined is properly adhered to.

Because the point that I would emphasize to you is it's not us—it's not Britain or America that's in breach of United Nations resolutions. It's Saddam Hussein and Iraq. And therefore, this issue is there for the international community to deal with. And we've got to make sure that it is a way of dealing with it.

President Bush. Patsy [Patricia Wilson, Reuters].

Regime Change in Iraq

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Yes.

Q. —what is your actual target in Iraq? Is it weapons of mass destruction or Saddam Hussein? And if the Prime Minister could answer too.

President Bush. Well, as you know, our Government in 1998—action that my administration has embraced—decided that this regime was not going to honor its commitments to get rid of weapons of mass destruction. The Clinton administration supported regime change. Many members of the current United States Senate supported regime change. My administration still supports regime change. There's all kinds of ways to change regimes.

This man is a man who said he was going to get rid of weapons of mass destruction. And for 11 long years, he has not fulfilled his promise. And we're going to talk about what to do about it. We owe it to future generations to deal with this problem, and that's what these discussions are all about.

Final question.

Call on somebody. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Blair. Yes, sure.

President Bush. Yes?

Support for Action Against Iraq

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, do you have any support from any—

President Bush. Pardon me?

Q. Do you have any support from any other countries in the world, apart from Britain? And Mr. Blair too.

President Bush. Yes. A lot of people understand that this man has defied every U.N. resolution—16 U.S. resolutions he's ignored. A lot of people understand he holds weapons of mass destruction. A lot of people understand he has invaded two countries. A lot of people understand he's gassed his own people. A lot of people understand he is unstable. So we've got a lot of support. A lot of people understand the danger.

Prime Minister Blair. Yes, and I can tell you from the discussions I've had with people—of course, there are people asking perfectly reasonable questions about this, but the one thing that no one can deny is that Saddam Hussein is in breach of the United Nations resolutions on weapons of mass destruction—that is, chemical, biological, nuclear weapons—that that poses a threat not just to the region, because there is no way, if those weapons were used, that the threat would simply stay in the region.

People understand that. Now, we've got to make sure that we work out a way forward that, of course, mobilizes the maximum support but does so on the basis of removing a threat that the United Nations itself has determined is a threat to the whole of the world.

President Bush. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you. Thanks.

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Pardon me?

President's Reaction to September 11

Q. Will you take one on 9/11, sir?

President Bush. Yes, go ahead.

Q. Let me ask you, sir, when you asked the American people for support——

President Bush. The only reason why is, he's a fine fellow.

Go ahead.

Q. When you asked the American people for support 2 years ago, there was no way, sir, anyone could have imagined the grim nature of the job you would take on. Had you known then what the job would entail, would you still have asked for it, sir? And would you have had any compunction about——

President Bush. There's no way that I could have possibly known what we were going to have to deal with. I'm a citizen of a country that has had these two vast oceans protecting us. For all these years we were safe. People couldn't come and attack us—so we thought. Of course, Hawaii got attacked, but that's not a part of our mainland. We felt secure here in the country.

There's no way we could have possibly envisioned that the battlefield would change. And it has. And that's why we've got to deal with all the threats. That's why Americans must understand that when a tyrant like Saddam Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction, it not only threatens the neighborhood in which he lives—it not only threatens the region—it can threaten the United States of America or Great Britain, for that matter. The battlefield has changed. We are in a new kind of war, and we've got to recognize that.

There's no way I could have possibly predicted that future. I'm honored to be the President. And so long as I am the President, I'm going to work hard to make America safe and the world more peaceful.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:51 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting a Report on Military
Personnel and Civilians Involved in
the Antinarcotics Campaign in
Colombia**

September 5, 2002

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 3204(f), title III, chapter 2 of the Emergency Supplemental Act, 2000 (the "Act"), as enacted in the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2001, Public Law 106-246, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration. The report provides "the aggregate number, locations, activities, and lengths of assignment for all temporary and permanent U.S. military personnel and U.S. individual civilians retained as contractors involved in the antinarcotics campaign in Colombia."

In so doing, I note and appreciate the continued strong bipartisan support given to U.S. programs assisting Colombia in the Act and elsewhere. This report is classified because of force protection considerations and the high level of terrorist threat in Colombia. However, the aggregate numbers given below are unclassified.

The report indicates that as of July 12, 2002, the end of this reporting period, there were 170 temporary and permanent U.S. military personnel and 228 U.S. civilians retained as individual contractors in Colombia involved in supporting Plan Colombia. This report further indicates that during May, June, and July 2002, these figures never exceeded the ceilings established in section 3204(b) of the Act, as amended.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 9.